

Historic Preservation Design Review

July 22, 2010

HP-10-13, 26 W. Liberty Street (City)

I. THE REQUEST

Applicant:	City of Sumter
Status of the Applicant:	Property Owner
Request:	Design approval for streetscape improvements to property located on W. Liberty Street, including the intersection at Main and Liberty and a pedestrian alleyway at 26 W. Liberty St.
Location:	W. Liberty St. between Main and Sumter Streets
Present Use/Zoning:	Vacant /CBD
Tax Map Reference:	228-13-07-003
Adjacent Property Land Use and Zoning:	North – Commercial /CBD South – Commercial /CBD East – Commercial /CBD West – Commercial /CBD

II. BACKGROUND

The applicant is requesting design approval for proposed streetscape improvements and landscaping on W. Liberty and Main, and a pedestrian alleyway on property located at 26 W. Liberty St. Based on conversations with the applicant and information submitted with the application, the City acquired this property with the intent to demolish the structure to create an alleyway to access the parking lot behind The Liberty Center from W. Liberty St. The property is an interior parcel on the south side of W. Liberty St. in the block between Sumter St. and Main St.



Demolition of the building located on this site was approved by the HPDR Committee at the December 2009 regular meeting, but as of the date this report was compiled, had not yet taken place.

Scope of Proposed Work:



The *Design Review Guidelines Manual* states:

#3) LANDSCAPING SHOULD COMPLEMENT RATHER THAN DETRACT FROM BUILDINGS

Recommended

- a. **Trees of limited height and dimensions should be considered for the downtown area.** Historic commercial areas such as downtown Sumter often had numerous shade trees to shelter pedestrians. With the coming of the automobile many of these trees were removed to make way for parking. The introduction of new trees into the downtown area is appropriate as long as the trees selected are of limited height and dimension. When mature, trees should not overly mask buildings and make signs and details difficult to observe. Trees should be spaced at least 30 feet from each other and have planting beds of at least nine square feet.
- b. **Low plants and shrubs at sidewalks are appropriate.** The introduction of low hedges or planters with flowers or other decorative plants is appropriate. These may be desired as part of an overall streetscape program by the city or added on an individual basis by property owners.

The plantings and their locations specified in the landscape plan are deliberately selected in accordance with HP Design Guidelines. Both the trees and associated shrubs and planters will complement rather than detract from neighboring buildings and pedestrian areas, and contribute to the area as an inviting passageway between Liberty Street and the parking lot behind the South Liberty Street buildings.

#4) SIDEWALK AND STREET IMPROVEMENTS SHOULD RESPECT DOWNTOWN CHARACTER

Recommended

- a. **Streetscape improvements should be in keeping with the traditional character of downtown.** Appropriate improvements include the introduction of brick sidewalks or textured concrete which imitates the appearance of brick. The use of brick or textured concrete can be of particular assistance in defining pedestrian crosswalks

across streets. Simple street furniture such as wood benches would also be appropriate. The addition of elements such as continuous metal or concrete canopies, oversized kiosks or gazebos, and ornate wrought iron street furniture should not occur.

- b. **Streetscape improvements should be selected for their simplicity and durability.** Many streetscape improvements completed across the country in the 1960s and 1970s are now in varying degrees of deterioration. In many of these cases materials or construction methods were selected which were incompatible with exposure to the elements or could not withstand the constant use by vehicles and pedestrians. Before any major expenditure for street furniture, sidewalk materials, or curbing, the longevity and lifespan of the proposed improvements should be carefully studied. Once selected, street furniture should be sited away from vehicular areas and be bolted or anchored in place to discourage vandalism.



III. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Based on the submitted plans and specifications being in accordance with the Guidelines, Staff recommends approval.

IV. HISTORIC PRESERVATION DESIGN REVIEW

The Sumter Historic Preservation Design Review Committee at its meeting on Thursday, July 22, 2010, voted to approve this request as presented.